SAND IN THE WHEELS

Weekly newsletter - n°27 – Wednesday 12th April 2000.

GLOBALIZE YOURSELF

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Globalize yourself

Often presented by the media as "anti-globalization" movement, ATTAC is in fact promoting globalization. "Another world is possible" as we said since the June 1999 international meeting in Saint Denis, France preparing the Seattle demonstrations. We are to meet this week in Washington, in Paris and all over Europe.

The Tobin Tax, a global response to neo-liberal globalization, will be a corner stone of several meetings and events in April. The Tax is NOT a "new issue" to be added to the already long list : environment, sweatshops, international financial institutions, commerce, neo-liberalism.... At a press conference on April 11 Representative DeFazio and Senator Wellstone will be presenting the "Tobin resolution", to be discussed in Congress during the coming year.

During the same press conference the European Deputy Harlem Desir (Head of the "Financial taxation" Euro-intergroup of parliamentarians, ATTAC) and the French Deputy Yann Galut (Head of the ATTAC group in French National Assembly) will be presenting the world "Tobin parliamentarians". The meeting, to be held at the end of June, will take place in a global context in which 100 parliamentarians from several political parties are reuniting to support a resolution drafted by Harry Barnes in the United Kingdom. The Belgium senate already voted a resolution asking their government to officially study the feasibility of the Tobin Tax. The voted counter-amendment to the "Tobin amendment" discussed in the French parliament last December will be discussed and the French presidency of the European Union will be asked to "study and propose a specific tax on all currency exchanges, to fight against financial speculative movements". Strong coalitions of parliamentarians are already at work in Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Argentina to name a few.

The US resolution is supported in the United States by several grass-root movements and trade unions: AFL-CIO, Center for Economic and Policy Resarch, Fifty Years is Enough, Friends of the Earth, Institute of Policy Research, Preamble, Steel Workers, Tobin Tax Initiative to name just a few. Some of them helped draft the resolution. You can reach this coalition through Ruthanne Cecil: cecilr@humboldt1.com

ATTAC, together with its partners, devised a "Tobin questionnaire" for worldwide discussion on collecting and managing the tax. The first results of this questionnaire will be discussed during the Geneva 2000 parallel summit in June (information: geneve2000@ras.eu.org email), among other topics.

It is time for all of us to take a step forward on political and economic discussions and to prepare ourselves for the 2001 United Nations meeting "Financing sustainable development". The main goal is to collectively decide, with the widest possible consensus, on the collection and management of the tax. This will help strengthen our proposals and arguments. In fact this questionnaire is simply a way to rethink the global financial architecture and governance. We strongly invite you to disseminate it as widely as possible and discuss it in your organizations, cities, political

parties, unions and so on... You can read and download the document from: http://attac.org/fra/asso/doc/doc14en.htm RTF and PDF versions are also available to help you printout the document.

The city of Arcata, which voted a call for the Tobin Tax last year, will promote this idea in other cities. With the help of a "Fair Trade Packet", designed also around issues such as environment, sweatshops, fair trade,etc. will try to lobby city councils to approve it. It is already envisaged that Berkeley, Santa Cruz, San Francisco... may see this packet voted soon. Meanwhile in France the "Morsang Appeal", http://attac.org/fra/asso/doc/doc08en.htm adopted during the national symposium organized by ATTAC in Morsang sur Orge, France with other cities and regional governments, has several consequences.

"Let us be actors of globalization and not only victims" is an idea that reunited already 47 cities (from villages to large cities) in all of France and around which an international sisterhood of cities to be developed. Let us not wait for globalization to happen, but let us build our own : with our own agenda and concerns. A website is already online http://attac.org/glocal only in French for the moment to collect documents and information. An international discussion mailinglist for civil servants and regional governments persons is being created. Any information request should be mailed to glocal@attac.org

In this context ATTAC will be part of the demonstrations, teach-ins... in Washington, D.C. on April 9-17 (any requests for information for those of you in Washington can de send to attac.mission@attac.org). We are organizing also with "Pour l'an 2000, annulons la dette" (Jubilee 2000 in France and in UK) a demonstration in Paris on the April 12 on the debt cancellation, because the "Club de Paris" will start to meet in this city on the same day. It will start at 06:00 pm Place de la Bastille in Paris.

It is about time that we "globalize" ourselves and that our concerns over the outcomes of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO meetings turn into concrete and productive proposals. Let us all participate in this movement to make globalization happen the way we pro-actively decide, rather than passively accept their globalization.

Laurent Jesover. Redactor newsletter@attac.org

From Bagkok to Geneva

Dear friends,

This letter contains some useful information pertaining to the implementation of one of the priorities defined in the Bangkok Appeal : the conference in Geneva in June.

We are sending you a general presentation of the Geneva conference with preliminary information regarding the agenda and the working plan. Soon we will have a Spanish translation.

The official conference will be held from June 26 - 30. Therefore we propose to meet from June 22 - 25. We will need a good month to discuss texts and proposals within our respective networks, fixing the end of May for the mailing of the agenda and the final texts. Consequently, we will have the month of May to prepare, write and amend our projects.

At ATTAC France we will have some means to help with the preparation of Geneva but this initiative must be as collective as possible. Thus we propose that we use the "transattac" list to facilitate contact between us. Please let us know as soon as possible which documents or workshops you can take charge of.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Best regards,
Christophe Aguiton, for ATTAC France
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Geneva 2000 June 22 – 25, 2000

General Objectives and Working Plan

This memo is intended to present information currently at our disposal and to facilitate debate and preparation for the Geneva initiative in different countries.

General Objectives

The point of departure for Geneva 2000 is Seattle. The failure of the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting and the mass protests in Seattle as well as in other countries introduced entirely new responsibilities for social movements directly implicated in the struggle against "neo-liberal

globalization". The different movements present at Seattle, however, were unable to explicitly define a common stance or a coordinated international plan of action. The Bangkok Appeal allowed social movements to establish a preliminary outline of the international situation after Seattle as well as to specify convenient meeting times, specifically the large international meeting to be held in Geneva - June 2000 dedicated to social/development questions. Geneva will also mark the 5-year anniversary of the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development.

The objectives of the Geneva meeting are three:

·to further enlarge the coordination network between international social movements, so as to facilitate their participation in the debates taking place during the Geneva meeting;

·to discuss the fundamental questions and problems currently marking international debate while attempting to determine positions in common or to, at least, clearly identify areas of difference and debate to be expounded upon in the future;

·to elaborate a common document which emphasizes all of the points upon which we are in agreement (the analysis of the consequences of neo-liberal globalization and our shared concerns regarding the social, environmental, and democratic agenda) while also identifying differences and debates yet to be discussed between us; to elaborate a second document which specifies the type of international movement/coordination to be established in order to develop an appropriate working plan for the coming months and years.

Other Initiatives

The meetings in Geneva are not only taking place in coordination with a UN Conference addressing a theme which concerns many social movements and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), but they are also coinciding with an important meeting of the International Labor Office (ILO). In addition, Geneva serves as the seat of the WTO! Hence, we will not be alone. Making contact with other actors present in Geneva during the second half of June 2000 is crucial.

Our information at this point:

·The UN

The Conference itself will last from the 26th until the 30th of June, the inaugural session being Sunday the 25th around 6 p.m. For all movements and NGOs wishing to participate in the discussions of the Conference, it is possible to demand accreditation. Some of our current partners are already accredited/ ManiTese from Italy, etc.

·The ILO

·This organization is also holding an international meeting in June (Directional Committee or AG) which will facilitate the presence of unions at many of our initiatives; mainly those who would be ready, in any case, to participate in debates with "civil society" regarding questions of particular importance to them (i.e. social norms). One difficulty we may encounter is the traditional hesitation of "social partners" (unions and employers) to dialogue with structures they consider largely unrepresentative (other social movements, NGOs). Progress has been made regarding this point though resistance and hesitation may still prove to be problems.

·Associations and NGOs

·A structure has already been put in place to coordinate parallel initiatives. Some of our partners (ManiTese, WEED from Germany, etc.) are included in this coordination. In Switzerland, four principal groups are responsible for the coordination of "Geneva 2000 :
·Social Watch
·ICSW, The International Council on Social Welfare
·WEDO, Women's Environment and Development Organization
·World Council of Churches

These four groups are participating in the organization of parallel initiatives with the NGLS ("the Non-Governmental Liaison Service", the UN service that links movements and NGOs). There is also a Swiss coalition of NGOs, "Swiss Coalition" or "The Working Community of Swiss NGOs", that is willing to collaborate on further parallel initiatives. More complicated is the creation of a "Forum" of NGOs and civil society, financed by the Helvetic Confederation and sponsored by many personalities, some of whom make up the Helvetic management; the forum has the responsibility for all parallel initiatives. In the framework of the Forum, many things are possible; we could have conference rooms at a reasonable price, however, there will also be a symposium organized by the

Swiss government that will be attended by the directors of the Davos forum!

We met with these movements and structures in Geneva, with ATTAC Switzerland and the Anti-WTO Coalition on Wednesday, March 22nd. A general agreement was reached with the NGOs on the possibility of working together and on the possibility of organizing a parallel summit. Concerning the question of the Forum, it will be up to ATTAC and the Anti-WTO Coalition to make the decision at their respective meetings on April 1st and 3rd.

At this stage it is necessary to develop ideas regarding the proposals we ought to make to them. Perhaps it would be best to propose that we all work on two documents (or two types of documents): one document addressed to the "peoples of the world" or at least to social movements, unions, and NGOs interested in the coordination of the struggle against "neo-liberal globalization"; and one document addressed to the UN Conference, containing the recommendations of NGOs and social movements.

This is the separation we made at Bangkok; it is mainly operational. Apparently certain groups will be interested in one document more than the other will. The common approach, however, will allow all groups to share a common organizational structure (making, for example, the 24th and the 25th a coordinated final general assembly) while, at the same time, showing clearly that we are able to work together and defend similar positions. At our meeting on the 22nd, the NGOs present did not yet know if their working papers were going to be presented at Geneva or not.

·A protest in front of the WTO. This is another important facet of our activities in Geneva: to show, when the negotiations are resuming within the framework of the WTO, that the social movements, unions, and associations are present and do not intend to let down their guard. On the 22nd we decided that at noon on the 25th we would open with a rally that would allow for the different movements present would have the opportunity to express themselves and present the their work. At two o'clock, we will begin our demonstration at the headquarters of the WTO.

·Agenda

This rough agenda addresses our broad concerns and objectives. Other initiatives and debates will surely be organized by one of the structures interested in the UN. When we meet with them, we must list what we are able to eventually organize together, and we must find the clearest and most coherent manner possible to present this information.

If we reconsider the objectives presented at the beginning of this note, we can define a list of themes and hence workshops to organize.

·To enlarge the participation of the movements, it is necessary to have agendas that correspond with the concerns of the participants and which facilitate debate. Concretely speaking, this can take the form of meetings and working groups divided according to continent, social sector, and specific militant concern. The meetings by continent have proven very positive thus far, for example at the June 1999 Paris meetings. The European-ATTACs plus partner associations have already decided to meet again at Geneva in June. With respect to all that is social sector or militant concern, we must consider specific demands, though it seems pertinent to organize meetings that address: women (around Beijing +5 and mainly the world march), farmers (with Via Campesina), unions, the unemployed and/or "urban movements". These meetings allow us to exchange insights and ideas and to discuss the heart of the debates. For example, a meeting around the World March of Women would allow a discussion about globalization, women and gender at large.

·The second objective includes debating seriously the questions posed at the international level. Here is a preliminary list of themes that seem particularly important to consider :
·The debt: the poorest countries and other countries from the Global South / ways to control debt accumulation / attitude to adopt regarding the initiatives of the G7…
·Social standards/norms : should strict rules and demands be defined, like the refusal of child labor or union rights / the best way to present and implement these demands
·Environmental standards
·Pension funds / their role in financial speculation and the deregulation of the economy, an exchange between countries where pension funds exist and countries where various movements are fighting against the introduction of pension funds
·The protection of social rights / the role of public services and the public sector
·The appropriation of living matter

·The growth of multinational and what kind of action we can take to fight the expansion of their power
·Financial speculation, the Tobin Tax, and tax havens
·Post-Seattle and financial crisis, the restructuring of international institutions, the development of new responses
·The third objective is to produce a document that defines the points upon which we are in agreement as well as a list of debates to pursue so that a working plan and a definition of the international network can be established. For this, it will be necessary to unite a "Resolutions Committee " early on to work on and enrich the text with the contributions of the various working groups. It will also be necessary (this is true for the working groups as well) to present pre-projects before June that will allow the different delegations to better prepare for the conference.

Concretely, it will be necessary to start, at the latest, on the morning of Thursday, the 22nd with a plenary assembly, which will present and discuss the agenda and the challenges ahead. This discussion will continue in the thematic working groups on Thursday afternoon and all day Friday. The evenings will be reserved for informal discussions (in order to finalize the final resolution). Moreover, the continental meetings can begin on Wednesday afternoon and evening to maximize the time of those coming from far away. The plenary assembly for the adoption of resolutions will last all-day Saturday and Sunday.

Working Plan

·End of March: two letters / one to the original signatories of the Bangkok Appeal to consider, together, how to organize and handle the parallel summit (who is responsible for what, division of labor/tasks, etc.) and the other to the rest of our contacts worldwide;
·Beginning of April: Set-up of a centralized information network and responses to our contacts: a specific Web site (or at least pages and a logo) for "Geneva 2000", telephone and fax lines, etc. Paris and Geneva will both play an important role in this centralization.
·Mid-April: elaboration of the preliminary texts on the points of debate, thanks to email it is possible to divide this responsibility;
·Meeting on the 26th of April in Geneva, of the core team responsible for the parallel summit; adoption of an agenda and the mailing of the first series of fundamental texts; beginning of the elaboration of the final resolution;
·During all of the month of May: verification of the presence of the principal continental movements; circulation of texts and the passing back and forth of the final resolution;
· Beginning of June: mailing of the final resolution.

Prague 2000, need urgently your active solidarity

Dear Friends,

In the forwarded mail you can read that we'll have problems with "legal" protests against the IMF/WB meeting in Prague in September. tell us, please, if you have any idea to help us actively!

all the best,
Andreas Rockstein <anro0002@stud.uni-sb.de>

The City of Prague has told 4 times NO to people wanting to legalize demos in September. So after four attempts we don't know what might happen, lets hope they will be more reasonable... If CZ authorities are so stupid to so obviously provoke violence then, we are all helpless-there will be violence-of which the dimensions will be different than we might expect. People will finally see how the eastern mafia is a big political actor where there is trade of oil, water, land, alias WB/IMF businesses...etc...by way of repression... But we have to wait more before making conclusions. Maybe we will have to internationally press on them with letters of complaints signed internationally , if they will make any legal demo impossible.. if not making them legal ourselves anyway..!!

In the meanwhile CZ police are sending their experts to Washington FBI in order to train them how to deal with extremists and they are successfully listening to some organizers trough mobile phones at this stage ,which is not a new thing..... Besides, all the media in CZ are already propagating violence in all possible way, as if they wanted violence. But nobody from the Czechs spoke about it of course. That is why the alternative media groups will have to be really well equipped and numerous to report this fake propaganda. This is the central task- the most important for people in Prague and for the outside activists, and finely for CZ citizens who are already now being told that terrorists will come to destroy the town. Also to report the so expected police violence a lot of activists with reporting skills and equipment will be needed here in Prague!

The city newspapers are announcing 20000 demonstrators and on the other hand the visa procedures are made complicated to large part of the demonstrators that will want to come. The visa procedure is indeed very complicated. Will require a lot of money for people coming from the developing countries.A nd besides the visa procedure will change again in June, so please start sending us details of people that wish to come to Prague. A good side of it is that we have the Geld Oder Leben coming to Prague, this is a strong presence , appropriately radical to additionally scare the city police.. and the IMF/WB officials.. Unfortunately the local NGOs have resulted more than disappointing, including the local Jubilee 2000(!!)in coming to terms of non violent direct action participation. Are we surprised?

Yesterday there was a panel discussion with NGOs ,WB representatives and Eric Toussaint-in the name of CADTM(ATTAC branch)-representing the Initiative... arguing with WB on the issues that have for years been "on the table" The results of it should have been on the official web of Prague people- http://go.to/stopmmf -which will hopefuly serve us with some english translations of the panel discussion and the press release soon.

Lets see what people tell us.

Please help

Tunisian ATTAC members were arrested py Tunisian police.

Fathi Chamki and Mohamed Chourabi were arrested by the police Saturday 9th April in Slimane. Fathi Chamki is the President of the RAID and Mohamed Chourabi is one of the active members of this organization (ATTAC Tunisia).

Please email to the Ministry of Justice and to the Ministry of Interior: mju@ministeres.tn and mint@ministeres.tn (and copy tunisie@attac.org and raid.rhone@attac.org) to express in a polite way:

1- your concern about the arrest
2- your need to know more about the reasons of the arrest
3- your hope to see them freed soon

Note: the Tunisian constitution is protecting the freedom of being and making a NGO. (at least it is written in it)